

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR US LY TS

SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S MEETING WITH TUNISIAN  
AMBASSADOR HEDDA ON SEPTEMBER 10

1. AMBASSADOR HEDDA CALLED ON UNDER SECRETARY HABIB, WHO  
WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON, TO EXPRESS  
APPRECIATION FOR "MASSIVE SUPPORT" FROM US DURING CRITICAL  
JULY/EARLY AUGUST PERIOD IN TUNISIAN RELATIONS WITH LIBYA,  
AND TO MAKE PLEA FOR INCREASED LEVELS OF US ECONOMIC  
ASSISTANCE DURING TUNISIA'S AMBITIOUS NEW FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

2. HEDDA BEGAN BY PRAISING THE SPECTRUM OF ACTIONS TAKEN  
BY BOTH US EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT TUNISIA  
WHEN LIBYA APPEARED MOST THREATENING. THIS SUPPORT WAS AS  
IMPORTANT AS LIBYA'S CONFRONTATION IN EAST WITH EGYPT IN  
BRINGING LIBYANS TO AGREE TO NEGOTIATE BILATERAL ISSUES,  
BEGINNING WITH AGREEMENT TO SUBMIT WATERS/SHELF DISPUTE TO  
THE HAGUE. TUNISIA STILL HAS BASIC IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES  
WITH LIBYA, BUT WILL "ACCOMPAGNER LE VOLEUR A SA PORTE"

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IN EFFORT TO MAINTAIN PEACE. TUNISIAN DELEGATION EXPECTED

LEAVE FOR HAGUE IMMINENTLY TO PREPARE WAY FOR ARBITRAL PROCEEDINGS.

3. AT SAME TIME, HEDDA SAID, TUNISIA MUST MAINTAIN DEFENSES AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE. MILITARY MISSION ARRIVING IN WASHINGTON OVER WEEKEND WOULD DISCUSS MINIMUM EQUIPMENT ACQUISITIONS NEEDED FOR DETERRENCE. ON ECONOMIC SIDE, TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT IS IN FINAL STAGES OF PREPARING AN "IMMENSE" PLAN FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS. HEDDA ACKNOWLEDGED IN DETAIL US CONTRIBUTIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE, BUT SAID FURTHER MAJOR EFFORTS WILL BE NECESSARY IF GOAL OF NEW PLAN TO ACHIEVE "TAKE OFF" IS TO BE REALIZED. FOREIGN FINANCING PROJECTED AT \$3.5 BILLION, OF WHICH SOURCES OF \$, BILLION CAN BE IDENTIFIED FAIRLY CLEARLY. ACHIEVING REMAINING \$1.5 BILLION, OR \$300 MILLION PER YEAR, WILL REQUIRE EXTRA EFFORTS ON PART OF ALL TUNISIA'S FRIENDS, PARTICULARLY U.S. U.S.-TUNISIAN JOINT COMMISSION WAS EXPECTED TO MEET SOON, PERHAPS IN OCTOBER, AND SHOULD BE HELD AT A HIGH LEVEL BECAUSE OF BASIC ISSUES IN TUNISIAN PLAN.

4. HABIB BEGAN REPLY BY AGREEING WITH TUNISIAN POLICY OF PURSUING DIALOGUE WITH LIBYA. TUNISIANS WOULD NATURALLY NEED TO KEEP EYES WIDE OPEN, BUT IT WAS TACTICALLY WISE TO KEEP TALKING WITH THEM. HE THEN POSED QUESTIONS TO HEDDA ABOUT POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FINANCING FOR FIVE-YEAR PLAN. IN REPLY, HEDDA SAID TUNISIA COUNTED ON SOME FINANCING FROM ARAB GULF STATES, BUT MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND MORE; ABOUT \$60-80 MILLION PER YEAR WAS FORESEEN FROM IBRD FOR PROJECT LOANS; AND PERHAPS \$25-50 MILLION PER YEAR FROM EXIM FOR MAJOR PURCHASES FROM US.

5. IN DISCUSSION OF JOINT COMMISSION PREPARATIONS, HABIB AGREED WITH HEDDA THAT MEETING SHOULD BE AT HIGH LEVEL, AND SAID SECRETARY KISSINGER WOULD IDEALLY CHAIR US SIDE. HOWEVER, DATES IN OCTOBER ARE TIGHT. ATHERTON SAID WE HAD PUT A PROPOSAL TO THE SECRETARY FOR A MEETING IN MID-OCTOBER. HABIB SAID THIS TIMING MIGHT BE POSSIBLE, AND WE CERTAINLY OUGHT TO DECIDE SOON BECAUSE OF THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS, BUT PERHAPS WE OUGHT TO LOOK AGAIN AT THE PROPOSAL THAT HAD BEEN PUT TO THE SECRETARY.

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6. HEDDA SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NEED TO KNOW IN A FEW DAYS OR WEEKS WHAT LEVELS OF US AID IT CAN EXPECT. HE CITED HUMPHREY/PERCY RESOLUTION, WHICH CALLED FOR "APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE". HABIB SAID THAT WITH ELECTIONS APPROACHING TIMING WAS NOT RIGHT FOR AN EXTRA EFFORT WITH CONGRESS TO INCREASE AID PROGRAMS. MOREOVER, FY 1977 BUDGET REQUESTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUB-

MITTED. ALTHOUGH PERCY/HUMPHREY RESOLUTION MIGHT HELP, THERE ARE FEW FUNDS. MOST SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES TO DATE HAVE BEEN "ONE-SHOT" EFFORTS, SPECIALLY PRESENTED TO

CONGRESS WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY. CONGRESS HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO INCREASE MULTIYEAR PROGRAMS SUBSTANTIALLY. HABIB ADVISED HEDDA TO WORK WITH FRIENDS IN CONGRESS FOR ACTION AFTER JANUARY 1977.

7. ATHERTON INFORMED HEDDA THAT STATE HAD AUTHORIZED DEFENSE EARLIER IN DAY TO SEND FORMAL NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS THAT LETTER OF OFFER HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR SALE OF CHAPARRAL MISSILES TO TUNISIA. ATHERTON ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR RESERVATIONS ENTERED BY TUNISIA TO COLOMBO NONALIGNED RESOLUTIONS ON KOREA AND PUERTO RICO. HABIB SAID PUERTO RICO ISSUE SATISFACTORI-Y RESOLVED FOR THIS YEAR, BUT WE WILL BE MEETING WITH OTHERS NEXT WEEK TO DECIDE NEXT STEPS ON KOREA AT UN, AND WILL WANT TO COME BACK TO THE MATTER WITH OUR FRIENDS.

8. ATHERTON ALSO MENTIONED ACTIONS OF TUNISIAN REP IN LOS COMMITTEE I, WHERE WE ARE STRIVING FOR ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE ON "ASSURED ACCESS" QUESTION. HEDDA ASKED FOR DETAILS, AND WE PROMISED TO PROVIDE THEM. ROBINSON

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